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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05
BIB-01 IO-13 ISO-00 /085 W
----------066323 200429Z /70
R 182132Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0623
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 08097

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PINS, UR
SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATION IN TBILISI ON GEORGIAN LANGUAGE TREATMENT IN DRAFT REPUBLIC CONSTITUTION

REF: (A) MOSCOW 7819, (B) MOSCOW 6871

1. TWO U.S. ATTORNEYS WHO WERE VISITING TBILISI DURING WEEKEND OF APRIL 14 TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THEY HAD HEARD FROM UNOFFICIAL SOVIET CONTACTS THERE THAT DEMONSTRATION REPORTED REFTEL A INCLUDED "MANY HUNDREDS" OF PEOPLE. THEY WERE IN THEIR HOTEL ABOUT TEN MINUTES FROM SITE OF DEMONSTRATION AT TIME IT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE OCCURRED, BUT REPORTED THAT THEY DID NOT SEE OR HEAR ANYTHING UNUSUAL.

2. MRS. SAKHAROV TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 17 THAT SHE RECEIVED ANONYMOUS PHONE CALL FROM TBILISI APRIL 15 TO EFFECT THAT SOME 5,000 HAD DEMONSTRATED PEACEFULLY IN TBILISI ON APRIL 14 AND THAT AS OF LATE APRIL 15 NO ARRESTS HAD BEEN MADE AND SITUATION IN CITY WAS NORMAL.

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3. NEW YORK TIMES BUREAU HERE HAS DETERMINED, ON BASIS OF PHONE CALL TO GEORGIAN NEWSPAPER "ZANYA VOSTOKA", THAT ARTICLE 75 GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION AS FINALLY ADOPTED, BEGINS WITH STATEMENT THAT GEORGIAN IS THE REPUBLIC'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.

4. COMMENT: LANGUAGE REMAINS MOST VISIBLE SYMBOL OF

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NATIONAL IDENTITY IN SOVIET UNION. SOVIET LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY BELIEVED, WRONGLY IT SEEMS, THAT "OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS" HAD CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY OVER PAST FORTY YEARS THAT CHANGED HANDLING OF LANGUAGE ISSUE IN DRAFT GEORGIAN REPUBLIC CONSTITUTION WOULD NOT PRODUCE SERIOUS REACTION. IN FACT, THE DRAFT ARTICLE 75, IN OUR VIEW, DID REFLECT THE BASIC REALITIES OF LANGUAGE USE IN THE REPUBLIC, BUT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF GEORGIANS SEEM UNWILLING TO HAVE THAT REALITY ENSHRINED IN THEIR CONSTITUTION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS ISSUE IN GEORGIA, AS WELL AS TO WATCH FOR A REACTION FROM GEORGIA'S POSSIBLY LESS VOLATILE ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIGHANI NEIGHBORS, WHOSE NATIVE LANGUAGES WERE SIMILARLY TREATED IN THEIR DRAFT REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS. TOON

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Litigation History:
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